1663
Guth

# A SERMON PREACH'D UPON Breach of Covenant,

*By that Reverend and Worthy Servant of* JESUS CHRIST, *Mr.* John Guthrie *ſometime Miniſter of the Goſpel at* Tarboltoun 1663.

2 CHRON: 15. 12. *And they entred into a Covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their ſoul.*

Verſ. 15. *And all Judah rejoiced at the Oath: for they had ſworn with all their heart, and ſought him with their whole deſire, and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them reſt round about.*

DEUT: 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; but with him that ſtandeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and alſo with him that is not here with us this day.*

NEH: 9. 38. *And becauſe of all this, we make a ſure Covenant, and write it, and our Princes, Levites, and Prieſts ſeal unto it.*

DEUT: 29. 24, 25. *All nations ſhall ſay, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men ſhall ſay, Becauſe they have forſaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their fathers which he made with them.*

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# TO THE READER.

THE *Design of Publishing this Treatise, especially at this time, is to evince to the World, what have been the Principles of the Church of* Scotland, *and Her Faithful and Constant Wrestlings against abjur'd Prelacy, that bitter Root of Human Invention, obtruded upon this Church, contrary to Her Received Reformation, and diametrically opposite to the Word of GOD, and our Covenants, both National and Solemn League. The Scope and Design of this Treatise, consists in these Two;* First, *In asserting and proving from Scripture, the irrevocable Tye and Obligation, this Land lies under to prosecute the Ends, and Designs of these solemn Sworn Covenants.* Secondly, *In answering some Objections adduced for debilitating their Obligations. This Treatise, by the Blessing of GOD upon the Conscientious Perusal, may be a Mean to discover our Ancient and Received Principles, and Practices in adhering to these Covenants, even to the Effusion of much Blood; and also, how far we are degenerated from our First Love and Wonted Zeal to, and Apostacy from our Covenant-Engagements, so as the Sense of our Covenant-Obligations, is not only slipt out of the Memories of some, but also out of the Judgments of not a few. If the Reader find any thing not so well connected, let it not be imputed to the Author, but to the Pen of him who gathered it from the Author's Mouth.*

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## Ezekiel, 17 Chap. 19 Ver.

*Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, as I live, ſurely mine Oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompenſe upon his own head.*

I Conceive in the Verſe that I have read, there is more ſolid Truth delivered by the Spirit of God, which cannot lye, than I am able to declare, when I have fallen to the Explication and Enlargement of it; yet the very firſt words in the 11 and 12 Verſes, ſpeak as much to the Truth contained in the reſt of the Sermons of *Ezekiel*, as that it is not laid before the People, neither left unto them in any confuſed way, which is not plain: But the Prophet gets a Commiſſion to ſhow them plainly, what the mind of the Lord was to them. This will more clearly appear, if you take notice of the former part of the Chapter, wherein theſe things are delivered plainly to the People by a Similitude, the Prophet having ſhewed to his Hearers the ſame things that he comes to ſpeak plainly of unto them, ſo that any Man might have thought this with himſelf, What needs ſo plain Preaching, and Application? Will not any Man that hears the Words take them up without any Appplication? You find the Lord in his Commiſſion to *Ezekiel*, after he Points out the Similitude of two Eagles taking away the Branches, he tells (now ſays he) Go to the City of *Jeruſalem* and ſay, Do ye underſtand theſe things, that God will avenge his broken Covenant againſt the King of *Jeruſalem*? And if they underſtand not theſe things, go and make them plain to them, and apply it to them; ſpare neither King nor Prince, but tell them this is my Meſſage; Thou haſt broken my Covenant, therefore by this Meſſage which I ſend to you, the Plague and the Vengeance of God ſhall come upon you, *As I live, ſaith the Lord.*

And leſt any of you who ſometime have heard us preſs the Oath of the Covenant in theſe Lands, ſhould now a-days think it alterable, and look upon it as a thing that may be diſpenſed with; therefore, we are through God's ſtrength from Scripture, to make out the indiſſolvable Tye of the Covenant; and that we beat not upon the Air in ſpeaking to that purpoſe, according to the Faithfulneſs of the Prophet's Commiſſion by the Lord, We intend to follow this Rule, as we ſhall be anſwerable to our Lord and Maſter; and to be free of your Blood, whoſe Souls are committed to our Charge, to lay it before you; and if you ſin againſt the Lord, then your Blood will be upon your own head; this we intend not to ſpeak in general but in particular; and if any Man will juſtle himſelf againſt the Lord, then he will break himſelf for ever.

And for making the words more clear, consider, that the King of *Babylon* as you read 2 *Kings* 24. 17. did change *Mattaniah*'s Name to *Zedekiah*, and made him King of *Jerusalem*, and afterward *Zedekiah* entered into Covenant with the King of *Babylon*, that he should abide Tributary to him; and for the Confirmation of it, he puts the King *Zedekiah* to Swear by the Lord. But after he had sent him home to *Jerusalem*, *Zedekiah* upon some supposed Advantage which he saw not at that time, did break his Covenant with the King of *Babylon*; therefore the Lord sends the Prophet to him, and says, *Since thou hast broken Covenant with the King of* Babylon *and has not keeped it, as I live saith the Lord, thou shall not prosper.* Yea the Lord noticeth and owns it so much, that he makes the Covenant sworn to the King of *Babylon*, his Covenant; and therefore says in that Verse, *As I live, my Oath which he hath despised, and my Covenant*, &c. This is the History, and we have it clearly set down in the Prophet's Commission, which he must not dare to sit, but faithfully doth deliver the same, as it is in the 33. Chap. of this Prophecy, Ver. 7,8. wherein the Prophet tells the Duty of the Watchmen of *Israel*, *Son of Man, I have set thee a Watchman unto the House of* Israel: *Therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked Man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the Wicked from his way, that wicked Man shall dye in his iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thy hand*; that is, whenever a Land or Kingdom is found guilty of such and such things for which the Lord's Wrath uses to come upon a People; if that be made known to the Prophets, they are bound to Preach and declare it, or else resolve that the Blood of all those, that are taken away with the Stroke, shall be charged on them as unfaithful Men in the House of God. And it were to be desired, that there were many to give warning; I fear there shall not the blood of a few in *Scotland* be required at the hands of Ministers for not giving faithful and timeous Warning; for as every Man that shall be taken away in his iniquity, and for his Defection shall be made to smart for it: so it shall be no Excuse to you the People, that the Ministers did not tell you; O but dreadful shall be the Account that Ministers must give for not telling the People!

In the words there is 1*st*. a threatning for Breach of Covenant, and 2*dly*. There is the Thing for which he doth threaten, and that's for despising the Oath, and breaking the Covenant of God. 3*dly*. The Confirmation that's fixed to the Threatning; would it not have been thought that this was enough, *Thus saith the Lord*, I will punish thee for breaking my Covenant? Now this is extraordinary, that it must have this put to it twice, *As I live saith the Lord, shall he break my Covenant and escape?* All this put together, speaks the certainty of the Threatning, ver. 16 and 19. and also the greatness of the Matter, and the weightiness of it, and how the Lord looks upon breach of Oaths and Covenants.

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The *Doctrine* from the Words, is, *That the Oath is indissolvable, the Breach whereof God recompenseth upon the heads of those that break it.* It's inviolable, it's in the words not framed by my Mouth; the Holy Ghost framed them in the mouth of *Ezekiel* the Prophet long ago, *As I live saith the Lord God, surely mine Oath,* &c. As applicable to our Case, consider, the Doctrine supposeth something that is not plainly spoken, and that is, That every Oath and Covenant of God is a thing that is inviolable, that is, may not nor can not be broken; For the better understanding whereof, there is something that is needful to an Oath and Covenant of the Lord. I am not to speak here in relation to the Covenant of Works between God and Man in his Integrity; neither am I to speak to the Covenant of Grace, either in the way of it's Dispensation on Mount *Sinai*, or as to the fulness of it under the New Testament, though all these are more properly called Covenants, because they are of his own devising: But we take the Covenant here in this place, to be of Mens Duties in the Land; and for keeping them the better, we take an Oath upon us in things that are neither Morally evil or good, but indifferent; but a Man once engaged by Oath cannot retract, though they be not commanded Duties, yet once entered into, they must stand; for when we open our mouths to the Lord, we cannot go back. But I say, for clearing this,

Consider what makes an Oath and Covenant of God: *1st.* It must be a thing in it self lawful; there is no Man that warrantably according to the word of God, may swear the thing which in it self is unlawful. *2dly.* It must be a thing in it self possible, within the Man's power; no Man is warranted to swear that which he cannot perform. *3dly.* When we take the Vows and Oath of God upon us, we interpone the Name of the Lord to it; we swear by the Lord; this is the thing here, that makes this Covenant the Covenant of the Lord; the King of *Babylon* made *Zedekiah* King of *Jerusalem* swear by the Lord. And it is more the Covenant of the Lord, when the King is Religious, and the thing commanded of the Lord which we are bound to obey, though we had never sworn it: Therefore it must stand, once entered into, lest we make enquiry after Vows, and so destroy that which is holy.

Now for further clearing of the words consider, *1st.* That in *Deut.* 23. 21. you may see, how much the Lord counts an Oath binding, *When thou shalt vow a Vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it*; for it will be sin to thee not to perform it; *but if thou shalt forbear to Vow, it shall be no sin in thee. Numb.* 30. The Lord gives out Laws to *Moses* for Vows, and will have them declared, v. 2. *If a Man vow a Vow to the Lord*, or swear an Oath, *to bind his Soul, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.* The Scripture is very full, so that a Man once engaged in Duty, if he break, the Vengeance of God shall be upon him.

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2*dly*. The Inviolableneſs of the Oath of God, is founded upon the Law of Nature and Nations. Wherefore is it that there is ſuch an Order in Ordinances to ſwear by the Name of the Lord? Is it not for this, think you, to make the Thing ſtand ſure? For the very Law of Nature teaches, That if a Man ſwear, he muſt ſwear by his God, and muſt keep it; and in like manner the Law of Nations for the Matter of Offenſive and Defenſive Arms, and as to the Matter of Ceſſation and Peace. Is not all this to hold out, that they deſign to ſecure themſelves by interponing the Name of God to it? Now once allow this, that Men may retract and break Covenant with God, then we break the Law of Nature and Nations too: and ſo there is not a Nation under the Sun ſecure, becauſe the way of continuing Peace (which is by the Name of the Lord being interpon'd) is broken, ſo that neither the Law of Nature or Nations (if it be broken) can ſtand; if that be granted, then it may be retracted.

The 3d Confirmation for the Truth of this Doctrine; The Lord himſelf in his Word hath declared a Man's tender keeping of the Covenant, Vow or Oath, that it is exceedingly well pleaſing to him; and that he has declared ſuch a Man bleſſed, *Pſ.* 15. 1. compared with the laſt words of the 4th Verſe, *Who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill*? Would not any Man think they are fooliſh that would not dwell in Heaven? Then look through, He ſhall dwell *that ſweareth to his own hurt and changeth not*. A Body that ſwears any thing, muſt keep it though it be to his hurt.

The 4th Thing for Confirmation of the Doctrine, as to the inviolableneſs of the Oath of God, it appears and is eſtabliſhed, as the Lord hath commanded the thing in his Word, and as it is founded upon the Law of Nature and Nations, and has the Promiſes; ſo the Lord has appeared an eminent Revenger upon the Breakers of this Oath and Covenant; that is to ſay, when Folk hath taken a Lawful Covenant upon them and has broken it, God will appear eminently in ſending Plagues upon them. And for proving this, we are not here to ſpeak of the Covenant given upon Mount *Sinai*, of which ſee the Ten Commands, how he threatens eminently to puniſh the Breakers thereof; or for not receiving Chriſt offered in the Goſpel-Covenant, without Queſtion he puniſheth his People for the Breach thereof; but we mean theſe Oaths and Covenants we enter into, whether they be commanded or not; yet once being entred into we muſt keep them, or elſe he will puniſh us, as is clear from theſe three following Inſtances.

The *firſt Inſtance* you have *Joſ*: 9. compared with 2 *Sam*: 21. where it will be found clearly, that the Covenant being broken by *Saul*, many Generations after it was made, he and his Houſe and the People muſt be eminently puniſhed for the Breach of it, by three years Famine: For the Princes and all the People of Iſrael are ſaid to have ſworn to the Gibeonites, (wherein many a black Face was ſeen among them) now this Covenant was meerly Civil, and the Oath could not be very well warranted, but yet when it was made, it was binding.

2d *Inſtance* to prove the Judgments on them, &c. Conſider *Jer.* 34. 8, &c. where you read, after the People had broken the Covenant they had made with the Servants, whom they had liberated, and yet brought them into Bondage afterwards; that the Lord ſayeth, Since you have done ſo, *I proclaim a liberty for you, &c.* that is, I ſhall pay you home in your own Coin, I will proclaim a Liberty to you for the Sword, Peſtilence and Famine.

3d *Inſtance* is in that place of the Text, Shall he break and ſhall he eſcape, ſaith the Lord? Though the Oath was given to an Uſurper, and *Zedekiah* being his Priſoner at the time, yet it was required at his hand. I ſhall ſay no more to it, but conſider how Covenant-breaches are reckon'd among the Deeds of the fleſh, *Rom.* 1. 31. 2 *Tim.* 3. 3. *without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers.* And, alſo I read of a great War betwixt the Turks and Chriſtians, the Chriſtians entering into Covenant with the Turks, the Pope gives the Chriſtians a Diſpenſation to break it before the day come: Upon this *Uladiſlaus* the King of *Hungary* came forth againſt *Amurath*, and when he came to the Field, he did firſt beat the Turks; then *Amurath* having the Covenant in his boſom, took it out, and lift up his eyes and ſaid, *If thou, crucified Chriſt, be a God as the Chriſtians profeſs thee to be, then take vengeance on them for this broken Covenant, and for the wrongs they have done to me.* And preſently the Turks fell upon the Chriſtians, and gave them a fatal Stroak, and gain'd the day, notwithſtanding the Chriſtians had ſcattered them before. A moſt remarkable Inſtance; this, I think, except People be more than curious, will ſatisfy them.

From all which you may ſee, that the inviolableneſs of Oaths and Covenants is founded upon the Law of Nature and Nations; and Scripture and Hiſtory is clear for it, that Covenants cannot be broken, except Folk reſolve to meet with the Deluge of God's Wrath.

For *Uſe* of this; 1. If it be ſo, that the Oath and Covenant of God once engaged into, cannot be broken, then let no Man deſpiſe the Oath and Covenant of God; let Folk be endeavouring to ſecure themſelves in this Truth, according to the Word of God.

2. If it be ſo, then know this, that all who venture on the Breach of it, do ſin againſt the Lord, againſt Precept, Promiſes, Law of Nature and Nations, and againſt Threatnings.

3. Since it's ſo, that every one doth ſin that makes void the Covenant of God, then let all that are under that Sin expect, that the Wrath and Vengeance of God will be upon them, which is the ſecond thing in the Text; becauſe of my Oath and Covenant which he hath deſpiſed, I will recompenſe it upon his own head. Underſtand now what I have been ſaying, and what I am driving at, left it be to you as the Similitude in the preceeding Verſes was to this People: For I declare plainly to you, That theſe three Kingdoms have deſpiſed the Oath and Covenant of God; and therefore according to the Word of God theſe 3 Kingdoms are to

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expect his dreadful Wrath and Vengeance, if he in Mercy prevent it not; let no Man or Woman be ignorant of these things afterward; remember I have told you that it shall be so.

But now I shall speak to some things which Folk may have for excusing themselves about the Solemn League and Covenant: and for understanding of them, consider, the Parliament of *Scotland*, *England* and *Ireland* entered into a Covenant for maintaining the Word of God and the Purity thereof, and putting away Prophanity; and engaged themselves against Schism, Heresie, Error, Popery and Prelacy; and there was an Oath of God taken for this End upon us; and our King took it at his Coronation; this Oath again is broken by our King and Parliament, and is despised: For which, according to the Word of God, Wrath will be upon the heads of these that have broken it, if God do not mercifully prevent it.

Now there are many that have many Excuses and many Objections about this Solemn League and Covenant; I shall therefore speak to some of them, and I take you to record this day, I intend not to preach Rebellion against King or Parliament, but according to the Word of God: and if it be Rebellion, we must take our hazard of it.

*Objection* 1. We are not bound to a Covenant and Oath which is not Lawful, *&c.* but this is such. *Ergo. Prob. Minor.* Because it wanted the Consent of the King the Supreme Magistrate. *Ergo.* I dare say, many of you have this Objection, which is no Ground for it; but to strengthen your Argument, look *Numbers* 30, compare 3d and 5th Verses; the Argument runs thus: The Subjects of a Land taking upon them to covenant with God, they can do no more in it than a Woman in her Father's House, *&c.* but so is it with these Lands: For seeing the King who is Supreme, did disallow it, therefore it is not binding.

*Answer* I. The Place alledged doth not speak directly to the thing; for though the King be a Civil Parent, he is not a Natural Parent.

II. This Place cannot be alledged to prove the thing; for the Matter is only spoken of a Woman in her Father's House, or subject to her Husband, *&c.* It is true that a Parent or Husband may disannul her Vows, being made without his Consent anent these things, wherein she is subject to her Parent or to her Husband; but that Place doth speak nothing of annulling the Man's Vow or the Widows, as vers. 2. for their Vows must stand.

III. God makes no Exception here but this first; and therefore it must stand. Will any of you who has this Argument say, that the King's [illegible] king or not taking the Covenant made the Covenant Lawful or Unlawful? Yet, though the King was not consenting to it, (which I will not grant) for there was at that time a Power for it; I will not take upon [illegible] dispute the Power that Parliaments have without a King, it's [illegible] my hand, yet I say) the Parliament has Power to put Folk to Duty, [illegible] they, will they.

IV. For making the Covenant valid and lawful, something may be added to it afterward, though not at the present time, (yet seeing it is afterwards added, it is enough) but so was it with our Covenant, there was a frequent Consent given to it by our King; and also it was subscribed by him, which is sufficient to make our Vows stand. *Numb.* 30. we see, if a Husband or Parent hold their Peace when they heard a Woman vow, the Vow did stand; much more if the Husband or Parent take the Vow upon themselves. I know no shadow imaginable of Excuse for them, the Word of God, which stands sure, makes against them: and since it is so, our King and Parliament cannot retract what they have done.

*Objection* 2*d.* Some will say, there is no Man but knows that the King has taken the Covenant, for it was not done in a Corner but he may break, because he was forced to it, and he was not absolutely free.

*Answ:* I. We did not hear tell of this before now; if any Man would have said at that time, that he was constrained to take it, he would be counted a very uncharitable Constructer.

II. Suppose that he was not free, which I will never grant, and suppose he was forced to the Oath, yet Scripture makes it out, that a Man's Swearing, though he was not free, must stand to it; Though it was not a spontaneous Act, yet it was a most voluntary Act. Again, Consider this in *Zedekiah*, he was a Captive, to whom? To a Heathen: (now no Man will say a Captive is a free Man, and a liberate Man) yet he swearing to the King of *Babylon* a Heathen, and breaking his Oath afterwards, God's Vengeance came upon him, for there is no dallying with God in these Matters; for all Casuists say, If a Man swear to a Robber to give him so much to spare his Life, he must keep his Oath, if it be in his power, though it be to his hurt. I shall say no more on this, but I am hopeful, if you will receive the Word in Love, ye shall have wherewith to answer your Adversaries in the Gate.

*Objection* 3*d.* The solemn League and Covenant must be broken, because we are not bound to keep with them that brake to us first: but it is so betwixt Us and *England*. *Ergo*. *Ans:* Is there not many make this Objection, which, I dare say, never read the Covenant: Thou poor blind Creature, how dare thou speak of it? These that will say so, it seems they never understood the League and Covenant, because it is not a Bargain betwixt two Parties on Earth, the one whereof breaking, the other is free; but these 3 Lands is one Party, and the God of Heaven is the other Party; therefore, though *England* should break, should *Scotland* break also the Covenant? It is not after this Tenor; We will endeavour Reformation in these Lands, but if you break, we will break also: No, it's each Man swearing for himself, that he shall in his Place and Station endeavour Reformation; so that if it were left all to one Man, he must endeavour

Reformation. For, consider the last words of the Article, each of them for themselves did lift up their hands to the Most High; and so these 3 Lands are one Party, and the other Party is the God of Heaven. Consider seriously upon it; for it's the thing you must either suffer for or sin, ere it be long without Remedy. Whatever *England* and *Ireland* have done in breaking the Covenant, we say, they justly must smart for it, according to the Word of God, if God in mercy prevent it not: nevertheless as long as there is in these Lands any who keep the Covenant, we are bound to keep it; and suppose there are many who had rather suffer for it than sin, as Witness the many scattered Flocks and Shepherds in these Lands; and supposing this were not, though both *England* and *Ireland* should quite it, yet *Scotland* is bound to it.

*Objection 4th.* We swear in the League and Covenant to that which is impossible and therefore it cannot be keeped.

*Answ.* If all these 3 Kingdoms, who have taken the Oath upon them, would sincerely stand to it, I hope there should be no need to stand out against it. The Objection is in this, We have sworn to reform *England*; now for Answer, We are not sworn to reform *England*, neither is *England* sworn to reform *Scotland*; but that which is sworn is this, Each of them are to endeavour in their Places and Callings the Reformation of Religion in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government in these Lands, and to reform *England*, according to the Word of God and the best Reformed Churches: For though we had never sworn an Oath, we are bound to promote the Kingdom of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. So that the Objection is rather out of Malice against the Word of God, than any conscionable Principle; he is not worth the Name of a Christian, that condemns this, for it is contrary to the Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*: So that we should study all Kingdoms Reformation, that they may become the Kingdoms of our Lord. If the King and Parliament were studying to reform as much as they are studying to deface and deform, there should be no need of this Objection.

*Objection 5th.* The Covenant which these Kingdoms entred into, as to their own Reformation, and as to the Reformation of all the rest, it was too rashly and inconsiderately gone about.

*Answer* I. I question if any of you who moves the Objection, knows what Consideration is; was there not Deliberation when there was Protestants and Remonstrators for the poor Lands? and at last they came to this with it, to enter into Covenant: wherefore it seems it was not indeliberate.

II. There was more Deliberation in it than many other Oaths in Scripture, and yet they did stand, as *Judges* 11. 35. the Vow of *Jephthah* when he met his Daughter, who will deny but that was a rash Oath, *to vow whatsoever came out of his door first, he would offer it up to the God of heaven?*

*heaven*? And yet it did bind him, while he says, *Alace, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low!* And might not his Daughter have said, Father, it's but a rash Vow, break it? Nay, says he, *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.*

III. To confirm it more, What would you think of a Covenant made between the People of the Lord and Heathens, and no Counsel sought from the Lord? *Jos.* 9. The Covenant is made there with the People of *Israel* and the *Gibeonites*; there you will see a Vow very rashly taken, yea not so much as to seek Counsel from the Lord; and *Israel* made Peace with them, *The Princes of the Congregation sware unto them.* Now I hope none of you will deny, but God's Counsel was sought to our Covenants, which was not sought in that Covenant, and yet for the Breach of it, all the Land did smart, as you may see 2 *Sam.* 21. Therefore, I conclude, Though a Covenant be entred into rashly, and want many things for making it compleat, yet opening the Mouth to the Lord, we cannot go back, or else we must expect the Wrath and Vengeance of God.

*Objection* 6*th.* The Covenant cannot be binding, because the Parties dealt craftily with us.

*Answer* I. *England* is not our Party that we covenanted with, but all the 3 Lands together, as one Party, and God the other Party with whom they covenanted.

II. Consider *Josh.* 9. and you will find how little weight this Objection hath in Matter of Covenanting: It's said in the 4*th* Verse, They did work wilily, and went as if they had been Ambassadours, yet *Joshua* & the Princes entred into Covenant with them, and when it was broken, the Land of *Israel* did smart for it.

*Objection* 7*th.* The Covenant binds us to things that are not particularly set down, but are so general as keep us in doubt; the Ground whereof is this, because we swear in general to endeavour the Reformation of *England*, according to the best Reformed Churches; but these Churches were not particularly set down and pitched upon: therefore it cannot stand.

*Answer* I. If there be any Man that would have a more particular Rule than the Word of God for Reformation, he must be sent to another Land to seek another Gospel from *Jews* or *Turks*; and if it be so, then there is not a Rule among us.

II. Comparing one part of the Covenant with another, its most particularly set down and determined; As (1*st.*) the Covenant is clear, the Reformation must not be Popery. (2*dly.*) The Bishops, Prelates, Arch-Bishops, Deans, Chapters, Curates, *&c.* I say, the Covenant is clear in chief, if it lays aside all these things; what, I pray you, remains in Debate then? I know nothing, except you make it either a Presbyterian or

Independent Covenant, and at that time Independency was to be brought to Presbytery; now since they pass by all these things, I hope the Matter is not left in the dark, as some think it is.

*Objection 8th.* Supposing the Covenant binds the Land, yet it binds none but these that took it.

*Answ:* Now I perceive there are many of you young and ranting Blades that think your selves happy Youths, because ye never took the Covenant; But I have a word to speak to such from the Scriptures, and therefore take it with you: Where ever a King and the Princes of a Land take a Covenant, the rest of the Land are bound to it, as you may see in that Covenant with the *Gibeonites;* The People there did not swear, yea they murmured against the Oath; but though the People did not swear, yet the Princes say, We have sworn to the Lord, we cannot touch them. Therefore do not beguile your selves, ye stand as surely engaged to it as I or he, who did subscribe it with our hands: Therefore the Breach of it shall be required at your hands, be you young or old, Men or Women; and therefore remember the 9. of *Joshua*, The Children of *Israel* did not smite them, because the Princes had sworn the Oath. Might not the People have said, Let them keep it, who did swear it? But it is not so, for they say, We have all sworn it, therefore we must not touch them.

*Object.* 9. Suppose it binds this Generation yet it cannot bind our Posterity. *Answer*, This same Generation that did swear it, hath broken it, and I fear the same Generation shall be punish'd for it. *2dly.* The Covenant doth directly bind all following Generations, *That our Children after us be found walking in Faith and Love, that the Lord may dwell among us*; these are the very words of the Covenant. For what end was these words put in? Was it not to bind our Posterity, and to keep Conformity and Unity, and to bind them to the Word of God? But you'll *say*, There is no mention of the Posterity. *Ans.* There was no Mention made of the Posterity of *Israel*, when the People of *Israel* made that Covenant with the *Gibeonites*, neither was there mention made of the *Gibeonites* Posterity, yet you may see the Covenant binding to their Posterity, as is clear *Josh.* 9. compared with 2 *Sam.* 21. so then you must understand, that the Covenant is absolute; therefore I conclude, that as sure as Sun and Moon endures in the Firmament, if there be any Generation in these Three Lands, God will require the Breach of His Covenant at their hands, and his Vengeance shall be upon them, if they repent not.

*Object.* 10. The King and Estates of the Land found hurt in keeping it. *Ans.* Ay but read *Psalm* 15. 1, 4. He that sweareth to his hurt and changeth not.

*Object.* 11. There will be eminent Advantages by the breaking of it, *Ergo. Answer.* For my self I do not understand any Advantage to these Three Lands comparable to the Solemn League; this is my Judgment:

But

But will you consider the Covenant betwixt *Joshua* and the *Gibeonites*, it was a Covenant contrary to God's Command, yet His Name being taken in it, could not be retracted, they dealt wilily with him, and they sought no Counsel from the Lord, and they were suspecting it in the mean time, and they knew it within 3 days afterward; yet because of the Breach of it, though it was broken out of Zeal to the Children of *Israel*, yet the People did smart for it by 3 Years Famine, and when it was broken, it was not the same Generation that broke it; I believe, and set all the Three Kingdoms Wit together, they will not get as many Excuses for the Breaches of the Covenant of our Kingdom as *Zedekiah* had for his Covenant: For *first*, his was contrary to God and his People; for he had promised to the People within 70 Years to be delivered; now the Covenant was, to keep them in Captivity, and to keep the Kingdom in Subjection. *2dly*. He was a Captive, and so forced to it. *3dly*. The Covenant was made with a Heathenish King, it was the direct Intent of the Covenant to make the Kingdom base as it is in the 14 verse, that it might not lift up it self. Now what could have been a greater Excuse to have broken the Covenant, than for him to have said, I cannot keep this Covenant because I will prove false to my People, for I was a Captive when he made me swear, *&c?* Therefore might he say, I will break it: But saith God, It is my Covenant, therefore I will recompense it upon his own head. And therefore I conclude, That whoever enters into Covenant, be what he will, especially when he is commanded, he must keep it: For he that breaks it, God's Vengeance shall be upon him. Now seing it is so, we are to expect, he will avenge his Broken Covenant upon these Lands, according to His Word.

Now the next thing in the Text is, That the Breakers of Covenant with God, God will recompense it upon their own heads; this is the words of the Text, *My Oath that he hath despised*, &c. Now to clear it to you, who they are that are Despisers of the Covenant; consider, *First*. That it is a Covenanter in Opinion and not in Practice, that is to say, There is not a Man that reforms not in his heart according to the Covenant, but he is a Breaker of the same; for this is the Articles of the Covenant. Therefore know assuredly, O ye Drunkards, Adulterers, Despisers of Ordinances, and the People of God, Sabbath Breakers, Covetous Persons and Civilians, who care for no more than an outward Profession; if ye be not endeavouring Reformation, and to keep the Covenant, God's Vengeance shall be upon you. Indeed we will hear many Folk who pretend to keep the Covenant: But they will let an Oath flee when they like; thou by so doing art a good Keeper of the Covenant indeed, thou art guilty before God, for thou never Covenanted in Heart and Affection.

*2dly*. All those despise the Covenant that care not for it; for there is no Indifferency here: Therefore all the Three Kingdoms may expect Wrath from the Lord, except they repent. *3dly*.

3*dly*. These are Despisers of the Covenant, who are Fathers of Lyes and Seditions, and find out Shifts to shun it; but whoever they be that are seeking Wiles to be freed of the Covenant, whether King or Parliament, God will send Vengeance on them. We are not here to Preach Rebellion or Treason, but what we shall warrant from the Lord's Word. *Zedekiah* was a King, and yet you find Vengeance came upon him; and so did it upon *Saul*'s House and Posterity for his Breach of Covenant; therefore let all take head to it.

But what would you have us to do, say ye? 1*st*. Consider what Case these Lands stand in? And what it is they ly under? Is it not the Breach of Covenant? and the Judgment of God will come upon them, if he in mercy prevent it not: Because we have sworn the Covenant, and broken it; therefore God has sworn, That we shall not prosper. O! Is there none among the Tribes of *Israel*, to lament these things this day, this sad Condition of these Three Lands, that they are guilty of breach of Covenant, and are under the threatning of most severe Judgments! Will you then bewail it, if you have any tenderness of heart, each Man for himself and for his Family. I know some Folk will say, Let it even be so, for we will never lift it up again; but of this afterward, now I would intreat you to beware of partaking of other Mens Sins, lest ye partake of their Plagues and Judgments. Wilt thou Vote with the King in Parliament to sin? then thou must Vote for Judgments. And I shall only say this, Endeavour to cover your selves now, with that which you would cover your selves with at the Day of Judgment. There will never a Man come in and say, The King must answer for me; no, no, the King must answer for himself. If you be not studying to keep these things, the Covering will be too narrow for you that Day. Again I would advise you to lay your thoughts aside from getting much of the World, but see if ye can get this that's in *Rev*. 3. 4. *Thou hast a few Names, even in* Sardis *which have not defiled their Garments, and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy*. It was a time then of great Defection, and these of them that continued stedfast, were as Signs and Wonders. O then walk now as you would desire to walk afterward! for surely these that ly down with sin unpardoned in the Grave, must resolve to ly in an eternal Bed of sorrow; and these that keep themselves clean, shall walk with the Lamb in white.

Now a word to that which I mentioned before, What shall we do, since these Lands have broken Covenant with God? I tell you that *Scotland* is bound to keep it, altho *England* and *Ireland* have broken it; and altho *Scotland* broke, yet *Ireland* and *England* are bound to stand to it. *Hos*. 4. 15. *Though thou Israel play the Harlot, yet let not Judah offend*; that is to say, As for you at this present time, though *England* and *Ireland* have broken, yet let not *Scotland* do so too. Suppose, there were but one Family in these Lands that would stand to it, and if all that Family should turn

turn their back upon it except one Perſon; truly that Perſon is bound to ſtand to it, *Joſh.* 24. 15. *Chooſe you whom you will ſerve; but as for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* Here is but a Family; ſo that if all the Kingdom ſhould forſwear the Covenant, yet ſo long as I am Maſter of a Family, I muſt ſerve the Lord, I muſt not ſerve other gods, that is to ſay, We ſhould not ſerve Popes nor Prelates, *&c.*

But what if it come to this, That there be no Man to bide by it at all but one Man? That Man is bound to keep it according to Scripture, read 1 *Kings* 19. 14. *I have been very jealous*, &c. from which I conclude according to the Scriptures, though *England* has forſaken, yet *Scotland* is bound; and tho' *Scotland* ſhould forſake, yet *England* is bound; and tho' both ſhould forſake, yet one Family is bound to ſtand to it. Therefore ſtudy to know your Duty, leſt the Wrath of God come upon you and your Poſterity; believe theſe things, for our King and Princes, Nobles and Miniſters, and all the People, and our Poſterity, is bound to it: So I leave it to you with this word, Happy is that Man that ſhall be ſtedfaſt in the Covenant, though all the reſt ſhould forſake it. But as to the Perſons who they are that ſhall continue ſtedfaſt, God has reſerved that to himſelf as a piece of his Sovereignty. Again, we hear not tell of a Publick Covenant ever ſworn and broken, but God viſibly plagued the Breakers thereof. There is no ſin God would have Folk laying more to heart than the Breach of Covenant: *As I live ſaith the Lord, ſurely mine Oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompenſe upon his own head.* God uſeth not to truſt Folk long, that break Covenant, without ſome viſible Stroke, as it was in *Saul*'s Days and *Zedekiah*'s. If you would have a Mark upon your Foreheads, and be keeped free from theſe things, be ſighing for the Abominations of theſe Lands, *Ezek.* 9. Wo to the Man that's rejoicing at this day. Is there no Family found ſighing for theſe things? if not, all the World ſhall hear tell of their Puniſhment. This we recommend to you, and do not ſay, that we did not give you warning: For we have told you this from the Word of the Lord, therefore receive it in love.

As for my ſelf, I know not what I may do, yet though I ſhould ſhrink from the Faith by my weakneſs, which God forbid, I ofttimes remember the words of *Nehemiah* and *Jeremiah* when they did teſtify againſt the People's ſins; and I do Proteſt againſt the Breach of Covenant, that I may not be made acceſſary to other Folks ſins, and leſt I be found guilty before the Lord, and be made Partaker of other Men's Judgments. This is the way, that the Prophets did uſe; this is no Rebellion or Treaſon: For if they think it Rebellion or Treaſon, and think it Cenſurable, I commit them to the Prophets who are gone to their Place, who did theſe things; and firſt puniſh them and then me. I commit all thir things to you, Lord engrave them on your Hearts, *Amen.*

FINIS.

XUM